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ABSTRACT

Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of living, but managing conflict is difficult for many people because they have not been taught how to resolve differences in cooperative, nonviolent ways. Communication problems can lead to misunderstanding and make conflicts more difficult to resolve. The Governor of Ohio has designated May 1-7, 2000 as Conflict Management Week. In the middle school classroom, making use of themes of conflict can invigorate subject areas across the curriculum. This activity booklet/guide offers ideas for improving the overall climate of the school and for learning how to resolve conflicts in the classroom. The guide first presents ideas for drawing attention to issues of conflict and peace. It then provides activities for helping students become aware of underlying causes of conflict. The guide cites the six steps to conflict resolution and states that, in addition to learning steps of a conflict management process, teachers may also work with students to enhance communication skills used in conflict management. According to the guide, these skills include understanding blocks to communication, using "I" statements, and improving listening skills--resources to teach these skills are included in the guide. The guide is divided into four broad sections: School-Wide Activities; Learning about Conflict; Communication Activities; and Conflict Management across the Curriculum. (NKA)

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Let's Resolve Conflicts Together

Conflict Management Week
May 1 - 7, 2000

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MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management

Maria Mone, Executive Director
Jennifer Batton, Director of School Programs

Ohio Department of Education

Dr. Susan Tave Zelman, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Dr. Hank Rubin, Associate Superintendent, Center for Students, Families, and Communities
Karen Heath, Interim Director, Office of Student and Family Programs
Dr. Lester Morrow, Interim Ass't. Director, Office of Student and Family Programs

The 2000 edition of the *Classroom and School Activities Series* has been supervised by Evan Albert, Educational Consultant, Office of Student and Family Programs and Jennifer Batton, Director of School Programs, Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management.

Special Thanks to Dr. Megan Tschannen-Moran for assisting with the 2000 update of activities.

For comments and questions, please contact:

Evan Albert
Office of Student and Family Programs
Ohio Department of Education
65 S. Front Street, Rm. 615
Columbus, OH 43215
Phone: (614) 466-6837
Fax: (614) 995- 3357

Jennifer Batton
Ohio Commission on Dispute
Resolution and Conflict Management
77 S. High Street, 24th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0124
Phone: 614-752-9595
Fax: 614-752-9682
jennifer.batton@cdr.state.oh.us

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Conflict Management Week
Middle School Activity Guide

The week of May 1-7, 2000 has been designated by the Governor of Ohio to be Conflict Management Week. With heightened awareness to issues of school safety, it is important for schools to take an active role in promoting constructive responses to conflict. The resources in this guide will help you do that.

During Conflict Management Week your school may want to engage in school-wide activities to draw attention to issues of conflict and peace. Ideas offered by OEA and Educators for Social Responsibility are found on pages 1–3 of this guide. A description of a process for improving the overall climate of the school through the use of the classroom meetings will be found on pages 4-5.

A first step in promoting constructive responses to conflict is to gain an understanding about conflict. Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of living. Managing conflict is difficult for many people because they have not been taught how to resolve differences in cooperative, nonviolent ways. However, appropriate responses can be learned. The *six steps of conflict resolution* are shared on pages 7-9, including a poster that can be reproduced for classroom use. Conflicts abound in part because individuals have different values, needs and desires. If the cause of a conflict is understood, the possibility of lasting resolution is greatly enhanced. Activities for helping students be aware of underlying causes of conflict are offered on pages 10-11.

Communication problems can lead to misunderstanding and make conflicts more difficult to resolve. In addition to learning steps of a conflict management process, teachers may also work with students to enhance the communication skills used in conflict management. These include understanding blocks to communication, using *I* statements, and improving listening skills. Resources to teach these skills are included in this guide on pages 12-18.

Making use of themes of conflict can invigorate subject areas across the curriculum. Studies have shown that student comprehension and retention of material was enhanced when students applied conflict concepts and skills in their academic subjects (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)[1]. There are numerous ways to infuse conflict awareness into every area of the curriculum. A few of them are offered on pages 20-27. Finally, a resource for sharing helpful conflict resolution strategies with parents is included on page 29.

I hope you will find these resources useful and that you have a successful Conflict Management Week. For more information visit our website at www.state.oh.us/cdr/ or contact:

Jennifer Batton
Director of School Programs
The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management
77 South High Street, 24th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0124
Phone: 614-752-9595 or Email: jennifer.batton@cdr.state.oh.us

[1] Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R. (1996). Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in elementary and secondary schools: A review of the research. Review of Educational Research, 66, 459-506.

Table of Contents

School-Wide Activites
A Week Against Violence: A list of Peace Week activities ..... Page 1

Ten Things Your School Can Do For Violence Prevention Day..... Page 3

The Class Meeting: Building Community in the Classroom ..... Page 4

Pushing Back the Boundaries..... Page 5

Learning About Conflict
6 Steps for Resolving Conflicts..... Page 7

A poster of the six step of conflict resolution..... Page 8

Conflict Web..... Page 9

Basic Needs Are At the Root of Conflict..... Page 10

Skit for "What's At the Root of Conflict?" activity..... Page 11

Communication Activities
Communication Slip-Ups and Blocks..... Page 12

Communication Rules of the Road..... Page 14

I Statement Poster..... Page 15

I Statement Worksheet ..... Page 16

Changing Inflammatory Statements ..... Page 17

The Art of Listening: Hearing the Real Message ..... Page 18

Conflict Management Across The Curriculum
Understanding Conflict Across the Curriculum..... Page 20

More Ways to Practice Conflict Skills Across the Curriculum..... Page 23

Academic Controversy..... Page 24

Conflict Management Art Slogans For Making Posters..... Page 25

The "Music Listening" Exercise ..... Page 26

Physical Education Shape Up!..... Page 27

Family Harmony..... Page 29

School-Wide Activities

A Week Against Violence

Some ideas from OEA's Peace and International Relations Committee.

To help OEA members organize the observance of a "Week Against Violence" in their own school system, the PIR Committee has compiled a list of suggested activities. The suggestions have been compiled from several resources, including the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which originated the Week Without Violence program nationally.

School activities

- **Peace graffiti wall.** Line a brick wall with brown or white paper. Add brick lines and the students, teachers and parents send a peaceful message.
- **Peace march.** Have students make their own peace signs. Take a peace walk.
- **Sing-a-long.** Invite parents and community members for an old fashioned peace sing-a-long.
- **Contests, contests.** Poetry, posters, essays, door decorating and more!
- **Fashion show.** Decorate hats, cardboard, T-shirts, buttons, etc. with peaceful messages.
- **Peace assembly.** Each class will share an activity from the suggested classroom ideas.
- **Peacemaker tree.** Each time a student completes a peacemaking task, fill out a leaf and add it to the tree.
- **Turn off the violence day.** Students and parents fill out a contract to turn off any violent TV program and work together on something peaceful. Post the contracts in the school.
- **Exchange readers.** Older students will read stories with a nonviolent message to younger students.
- **Peace toss contest.** Decorate frisbees with peace signs. Toss them for distance.
- **Peace cookies bake sale.** Decorate sugar cookies with peace signs. Send proceeds to an organization against violence.
- **Community guest speakers.** Ask members of the local and state government to speak about conflict and about ways to deal with it.

Classroom activities

- **Find kindness in the newspaper.** Create a collage of pictures and words demonstrating a peaceful environment.
- **Design peaceful bumper stickers.**
- **Develop a "Peace Newspaper."**
- **Read "Random Acts of Kindness."**
- **Create a nonviolence pledge** to be read every day.
- **Write a play** and perform for parents and other classes.
- **Create peace word searches** and crossword puzzles. Change the lyrics to a popular song to fit the peace theme.
- **Sponsor an essay contest** about violence.
- **Start a peace train** or corner for reading.
- **Perform a peace rap** or peace song.
- **Start a peace chain** for doing good deeds.
- **Come up with a peace quote** for the day.
- **Study the great peacemakers.**
- **Analyze the number/amount** of violent programs/violence on TV and in music.
- **Write a letter** to the future me.
- **Write about what it will be like** ten years down the road, including one's hopes for peace.

- **Identify ten student acts of peace.**
- **Give students an "I have a dream"** writing assignment for making the world more peaceful.
- **Have students design** and put up peace posters.
- **Display a peace quilt.**
- **Make place mats and posters** and decorate grocery bags for businesses to use.
- **Contact the local police** department for ideas.
- **Paint a peace mural** on a wall in the school.
- **Study the amount of publicity** given to peaceful versus violent events on the front page of the newspaper.
- **Do a good deed.**

Community activities

- **Host an evening** of cooperative family games.
- **Sponsor a series of lectures** about handling conflict in the home.
- **Start a peer mediation** class for parents and kids.
- **Sponsor a safety fair** for children and adults to raise self-esteem and promote self-confidence.
- **Get involved in community service** projects (for example, food banks or work with senior citizens).

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September, 1996, pp. 10-11.

Ten Things Your School Can Do For Violence Prevention Day

1. **Develop a Violence Awareness Campaign**---Have students create posters, buttons, bumper stickers, etc., that promote non-violence and educate on the dangers of violence.

2. **Bring in Guest Speakers**---Your community has a wide range of expertise on the problem of violence and how to prevent it. Bring in representatives from law enforcement, domestic violence, conflict resolution, counseling, etc., who can speak to students and staff.

3. **Monitor T.V. Violence**---Television programming is a teacher. Have students keep T.V. logs in which they record the shows they watch and the acts of violence they see in those shows. Which shows are the most violent? Which stations air the most violent programming? Write letters congratulating those who don't.

4. **Implement a Conflict Resolution Program**---How are conflicts resolved in your school? Do the adults need more conflict resolution skills? Do the students? Explore establishing new conflict resolution procedures, implementing a conflict resolution curriculum, or getting training for students and staff.

5. **Hold a Non-Violence Book Fair**---Ask the librarian to collect and display books and other print and non-print materials related to violence and non-violence. This can include novels, picture books, recordings, videos, non-fiction books, and periodicals. This can be tied into a *Heroes and Heroines of Non-Violence* theme.

6. **Increase Cross-Cultural Understanding**---Divisions between people based on cultural differences can contribute to violence. But differences can also be valuable and enriching. Give students an opportunity to learn about the contributions of various cultures and a chance to discuss the difficulties and rewards of cultural diversity.

7. **Write Letters**---Let elected officials, news media, community leaders, and other decision makers know how you feel about preventing violence. Have students and staff write letters urging support of violence-prevention efforts.

8. **Support Anger Awareness**---Everyone gets angry, but it needn't lead to violence. Help students identify and practice constructive ways to express anger. Ask mental health professionals for help in locating such resources as discussion tips, role-play situations, and curriculum activities.

9. **Develop a Violence Prevention Plan for Your School**---Have staff and students develop a plan for dealing with school violence. Decide procedures for intervening in violent situations, and plan for ways to prevent violence from recurring by implementing conflict resolution, anger awareness, and cultural diversity programs.

10. **Inaugurate a School Peace Prize**---Recognize contributions to violence prevention. Form a committee to establish criteria and award certificates of merit to the students, staff, and community members whose efforts make for a more peaceful and constructive school community.

And Start Planning Now for Next Year, for a Violence Prevention Week!

Prepared by William J. Kreidler, Educators for Social Responsibility
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How It Works

To initiate a democratic classroom, begin by discussing the meaning of the word "community." Lead your students to the realization that each member of a community affects every other member. Then establish the fact that your classroom is a community and that every member has a right to express his or her concerns.

Display a decorated can or box labeled Community Concerns along with a pad of paper. Explain that anyone with a classroom-related problem can make a note and put it in the container. Concerns may be signed or submitted anonymously.

When the first concern appears, schedule a meeting. I have found it wise to set a time limit of about 15 minutes. Short meetings help students to stay focused and generate fresh ideas. Ask the students to arrange themselves in a circle so everyone can see and hear each other. Establish a few ground rules. For example:

Take turns to speak.
Every idea has value. No making fun of ideas.
Everyone is equal. The teacher has no more power than anyone else.
Listen while someone else is speaking.

There will be no voting. Discussion will continue until a consensus* solution is agreed upon or the group decides to disagree and go on to another topic.

Ask a student to reach into the Community Concerns box, pull out a concern and read it aloud to the group. Then just let the discussion flow. It is helpful for the teacher or student to list the topics discussed and the pros and cons of each idea so that the discussion stays on track.

In the beginning, the teacher may serve as facilitator of the meeting, making sure everyone has a chance to speak, maintaining the process and the ground rules agreed upon by the group, clarifying questions and concerns and asking appropriate questions to encourage consensus. Eventually, the students can take turns facilitating the meeting. In doing so, they will learn leadership skills and feel a sense of empowerment. At this time, the classroom teacher can "melt" into the group- allowing the true meaning of equality to become strikingly apparent.

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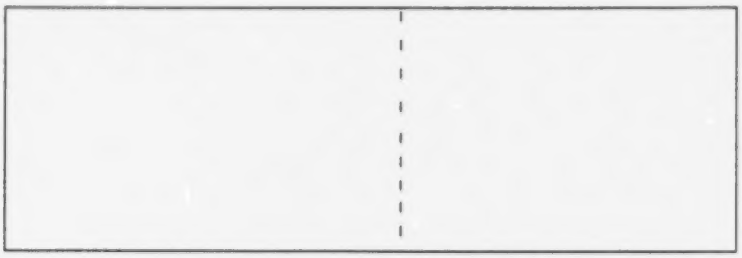
Pushing Back the Boundaries

Preparation: Roll paper and marking pens

Facilitator's Introduction: We have been learning about better ways for people to communicate, one on one. Today we are going to broaden our focus to explore the social climate of our school. We are going to ask ourselves which behaviors are generally acceptable, and which ones are not.

• Organize students into groups of four and pass out roll paper and marking pens (one large piece of paper per group).

• Draw a big rectangle on the blackboard, and ask students to draw one on their paper. Now draw a broken line delineating a box on the right side, and ask them to do the same. Write "ACCEPTABLE" and "NOT ACCEPTABLE" underneath, as indicated, and ask them to do the same on their paper.



ACCEPTABLE NOT ACCEPTABLE

Ask students: Think about your relationships at school: boy-girl, boy-boy, and girl-girl. Outside the box, make two lists: one list of aggressive or violent actions that are directed specifically towards girls, and another list of actions that are directed towards boys.

Actions directed to girls: Actions directed to boys:

Some examples are:

- Excluding a girl from your group because she says she wants to become a scientist;
- A boy telling his girlfriend who she can hang out with;
- Guys ganging up on a new kid because he wears pants that are too short;
- Bullying and teasing boys who are physically weaker.

Place the different violent or aggressive actions on either side of the broken line, according to whether or not they are considered acceptable within the social context of the school.

If you're not sure whether a certain behavior is acceptable, write it across the broken line.

Ask students from each group to report two of the items their group listed under each category, and write them on the flip chart.

Ask students what they wrote on the broken line, and have them write it on the flip chart.

Ask how they feel about these things that are straddling the line.

Q. How do you think these activities hurt people both emotionally and physically?

Q. Would you like these things to be in the "not acceptable" category? If so, re-draw the broken line. (This should be decided on a per-group basis.) If you do move the line, you're making a statement that you would like to have a bigger area for the activities that are not acceptable here at school. That's taking a big step in the direction of making this a Violence-Free School.

Closure: You have the power to decide what is acceptable in your relationships, and at school. If you would like to create a Violence-Free-School, you can help bring it about, but it's going to take a concerted effort. Teachers, administrators, and students are all going to have to pitch in together on this.

Reprinted from Healthy Relationships: A Violence Prevention Curriculum © April, 1994, with permission of Men For Change of Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada.

Learning About Conflict

6 Steps for Resolving Conflicts

Agree to ground rules:
Show respect to the other person. Use the person's proper name.
One person speaks at a time. Do not interrupt.
Listen carefully to what the other person is saying.

Step 1

First Person

State the Problem
Tell how you feel. (I feel_____, when____ because_____.)
Ask for what you need or want from the other person.

Step 2

Second Person

Restate what you heard the other person say. (Person's name), I heard you say....

Step 3

State the Problem
Tell how you feel. (I feel_____, when____ because_____.)
Ask for what you need or want from the other person.

Step 4

Restate what you heard the other person say. (Person's name), I heard you say....

Step 5

Both People

Brainstorm ideas for how both people can get what they need.

Step 6

Evaluate the alternatives and select one. Agree on how it will be implemented

Developed by Megan Tschannen-Moran, Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management.

HOW TO SETTLE DIFFERENCES

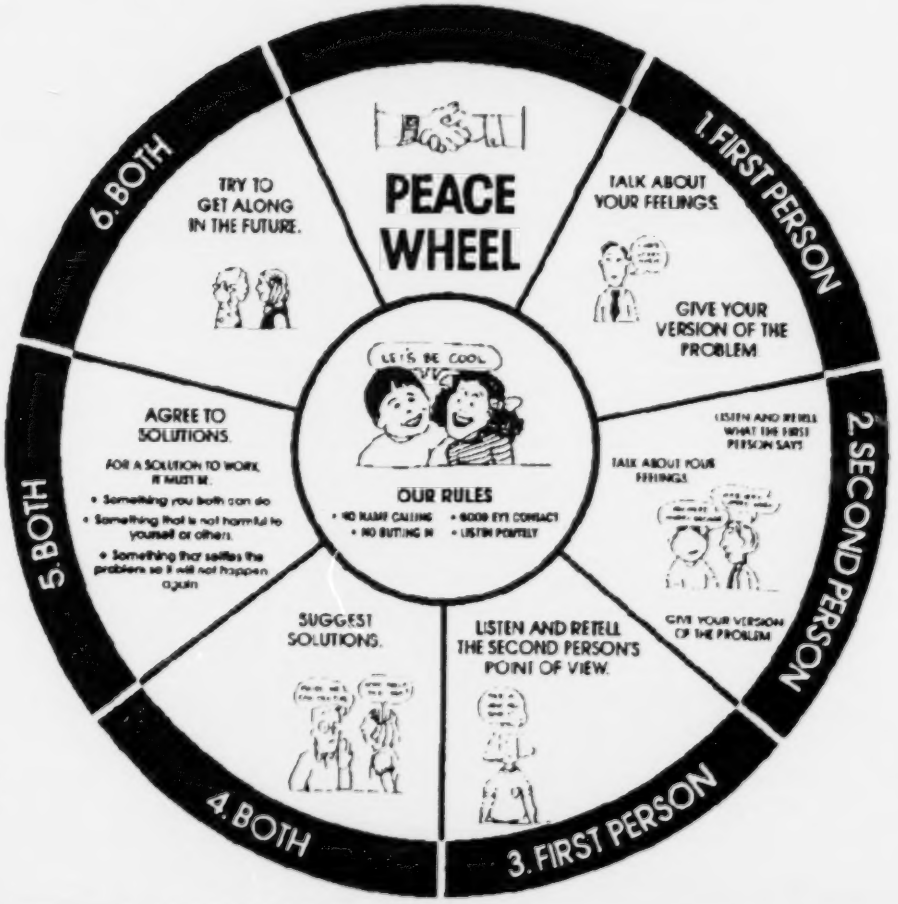
Resolution is a settlement between them

TAKE TURNS

Everybody Wins

GET HELP

People who may be counted on for a fair decision include friends, parents, teachers, religious leaders.


PEACE WHEEL
1. FIRST PERSON
TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.
GIVE YOUR VERSION OF THE PROBLEM.
2. SECOND PERSON
LISTEN AND RETELL WHAT THE FIRST PERSON SAYS.
TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.
GIVE YOUR VERSION OF THE PROBLEM.
3. FIRST PERSON
LISTEN AND RETELL THE SECOND PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW.
4. BOTH
SUGGEST SOLUTIONS.
5. BOTH
AGREE TO SOLUTIONS.
FOR A SOLUTION TO WORK, IT MUST BE:
• Something you both can do
• Something that is not harmful to yourself or others.
• Something that settles the problem so it will not happen again.
6. BOTH
TRY TO GET ALONG IN THE FUTURE.
OUR RULES
• NO NAME CALLING
• GOOD EYE CONTACT
• NO BUTTING IN
• LISTEN POLITELY

AVOID

Sometimes it's not worth the bother. Let the other person have it.

APOLOGIZE

"I'm Sorry" doesn't mean "I'm Wrong" It lets the other person know that you are sorry about the situation.

Reprinted with permission from *Creative Conflict Solving for Kids* by Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman, © 1985 the Grace Contrino Abrams Peace Education Foundation

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Conflict Web

Subject: Language Arts

Objective: Students will define conflict and will recognize what helps and what hinders conflict resolution.

Materials: chalkboard and chalk or very large sheet of paper with markers

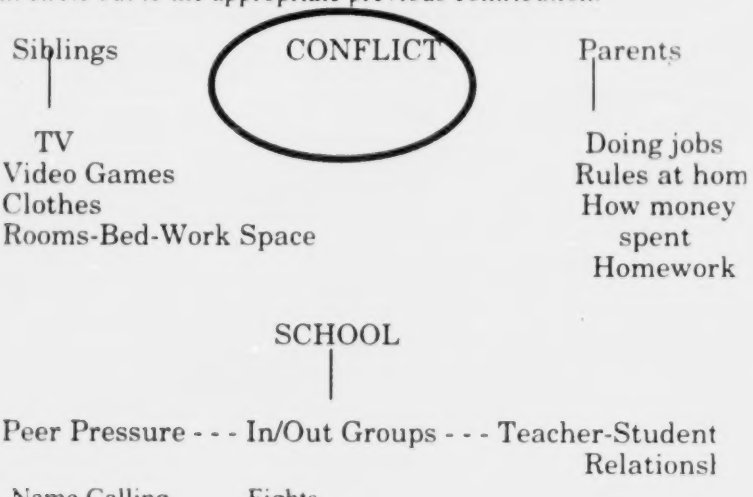
Procedure:

This activity gives students a look at the big picture about conflict.

1. In the center of the paper write the word "Conflict", and circle it.

2. Ask the class what the word means and what associations and memories it evokes. Each time something is suggested, draw a solid line from the main circle and add the word or phrase:

3. As students begin suggesting ideas related to those previously suggested, link them not to the main circle but to the appropriate previous contribution.



Continue the web as long as interest remains high.

Discussion:

How could we define conflict? What causes conflict?
What elements do all conflicts seem to have in common?
What makes it worse? What cools it off?

Adapted from Peace is The Whole World Smiling, 1994, with permission from Colonial Hills School.

Basic Needs Are At the Root of Conflict

Purpose: To understand some of the underlying causes of conflict.

Materials: Drawing of a tree on butcher or chart paper, "Basic Needs" handouts, skit, (following pages) magic marker, Post-its

Lead-In: "Most of us can live peacefully with our own faults, but the faults of others get on our nerves" *Banking*

Directions:

[1] On the wall or chart stand, place a drawing of a large tree with long branches and spreading roots.

[2] Divide students into groups of 4-6. Ask each group to take two minutes (a) to decide what are the five most common conflicts and (2) to write each one on a separate Post-it. (Examples: name-calling, rumors, different expectations, assumption, resources, time, money, position, space, material goods, property, values, unmet needs.)

[3] Tell students that most conflicts happen because one or more of the 5 basic needs are not being met. Each of the 5 main categories of "Needs" (words below in **bold**) is printed on a separate card. Descriptive words are written on the back of cards.

- **Belonging:** [loving, sharing, co-operating, "fitting in" w/ others]
- **Power:** [feeling important, being respected]
- **Freedom:** [making choices]
- **Fun:** [laughing, playing, finding joy in life]
- **Security:** [feeling safe from put-downs, ridicule]

[4] Five students are asked to volunteer. Each is to face the group and hold up one of the "5 Basic Needs" cards. They are to identify the "need" on their individual card and read the explanation which is on the back of the card. (Students are teaching their peers.)

Understanding this concept can help us to avoid taking the negative behavior of others so personally. It also helps us not to automatically "blame" the other person or think he/she is just a "jerk." Instead, this person can be seen as someone who is, like the rest of us, trying to get his/her needs met, and perhaps this is the only way he/she knows how to act at this time.

[5] **Skit to illustrate the concept and to check understanding:** Have several students prepare ahead to act out a short skit showing a conflict situation. (Example of skit follows.) After watching the skit, students analyze the unmet needs (root of the conflict) of those involved.

[6] Refer back to several of the conflicts on the branches and have students identify some possible unmet needs.

Processing: Why is the identification of need so important in resolving a conflict?

Skit for "What's At the Root of Conflict?" activity:
(Cut on lines in order to give each of the three actors the following skit description.)

Rasha and Tim are talking in the cafeteria.

Christy walks by and Rasha starts trying to get Tim to put ice down Christy's back, just to see if they can "get her going!" Tim doesn't want to do it but Rasha keeps pressuring him. Tim let's Rasha talk him into it.

Tim walks over to Christy, puts ice down her back, and runs. It catches Christy off-guard--she drops her tray--is real embarrassed (everybody in the cafeteria is looking.) She is furious, runs after Tim - doesn't catch him, and has to go back and clean up the mess she made dropping her tray. Some of the students standing around are roaring with laughter.

Teacher stops the role play at this point by saying "Cut!" Audience analyzes the "unmet needs" of each character.

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Communication Activities

Communication Slip-Ups and Blocks

Slip-Ups

You can probably see why there are so many slip-ups in communication. Many times a sender just assumes that the receiver knows what he or she means. Other times, a receiver thinks "Oh, I get it" and completely misinterprets the message.

Describe a recent incident in which your communication was misinterpreted.

_____

_____

Why do you think this happened?_____

_____

Describe a recent incident in which YOU misinterpreted the communication of someone_____

_____

How did this happen?_____

_____

Communication Blocks

Here are more behaviors that seriously hamper communication - or stop it altogether.

Interrupting/Dominating

People interrupt because they:

1. get impatient when a speaker is slow to transform a thought into a statement (encode a message).
2. are reminded of something they want to say and can't wait their turn.
3. are more interested in their own thoughts and ideas than in those of others.

Have you ever tried to have a conversation with a person who continually interrupts you? How do you feel when this happens?

Advising

"Well, if I were you..." or "I think you should..." or "Take my advice and..." By giving unasked for advice, a person immediately takes a position of superiority. Advice-giving says, "I know better than you do."

Judging
Not only does a "communication judge" assume a superior position in conversation, but his or her judgments may be completely wrong. For example, suppose you say to someone, "I have a dog named Charlie." The person responds, "What a good person you are - all dog lovers are fine people. What kind is it?" You answer, "A poodle." Your listener responds, "Oh, that's too bad. Poodles are high strung and hard to train."

Probing
Asking lots of questions tends to put the speaker on the defensive. More importantly, questions can lead the speaker away from what he or she wants to say. For example, suppose you are trying to describe your day to a friend. But as soon as you mention the first thing that happened, your friend asks, "What did you do that for? What happened? What did she say?" etc.

Accusing/Contradicting
Suppose while talking to some friends, you say, "I wrote this paper on my computer." One of the friends jumps in with, "No you didn't, since when have you had a computer?" You respond, "I bought it with money I saved." To which the same friend says, "You never have any money, so how could you save money?" Contradictions and accusations put the speaker on the spot and cause him/her to get defensive.

Criticizing/Name-calling/Putting-down
Suppose you say, "I have a dog named Charlie." Your listener responds, "You jerk, what did you get a dog for? You can't even take care of that mangy cat of yours!"
Criticism can make the speaker feel wrong or unworthy. Few of us want to continue a conversation in which we are being criticized. Name-calling and put-downs are frequently veiled in humor, but may still be hurtful and damaging to a relationship.

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Communication Rules of the Road:

No "You" statements. Use statements that begin with the word "I". Do not use statements that include the word "you," because these statements make people feel defensive.

Slow. Remember, it takes time to settle a conflict. Go slow at first, because conflict resolvers usually encounter some rough roads in the beginning. Keep using your I-way map to reach safer roads.

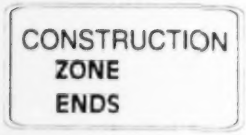
Detour Ahead. Sometimes tempers are flaring so much that it may be necessary to take a temporary detour from the communication I-way. Once the tempers have calmed down, you may begin using I statements to solve the problem.

Exit Ahead. Most conflicts can be resolved through effective communication. However, if you begin to feel threatened or unsafe, you should exit the communication I-way and seek safety.

Construction Zone. Construct an I-way statement by following these directions:

- use the word "I"
- state how you feel
- state the specific behavior that you do not like
- state your willingness to cooperatively resolve the problem

Merge Ahead. After using properly constructed I-way statements, individuals can begin to share ideas for how to solve the problem. Often, the best solution is reached when two people merge their ideas together.



End of Construction. After reaching a solution that the two individuals agree will work, they can resume normal activities.

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I Statement Poster

Name the feeling you have.

" I feel_____

Name the behavior that bothers you.

"when_____

Tell what the consequences of the behavior are.

"because_____

Say what you want to happen instead.

"and I would like_____"

I Statement Worksheet

Write an I Statement for each problem.

1. You loan your library book to your friend and he she loses it.

   I _____

   when _____

   because _____

2. Your best friend shows your boyfriend (or girlfriend) a note you wrote about him (or her).

   I _____

   when _____

   because _____

3. The student next to you looks at your work during a test and gets you into trouble.

   I _____

   when _____

   because _____

4. Your mother makes you wash the dishes, which makes you late for the movies.

   I _____

   when _____

   because _____

5. Your teacher always calls you by your "real` name, Francis. You hate this name. Everyone else calls you Frank.

   I _____

   when _____

   because _____

6. Even though there is no dress-code, your parents won't let you wear sneakers to school. Everyone else does.

   I _____

   when _____

   because _____

7. The student who sits behind you in class distracts you by constantly tapping your chair and throwing paper wads at you.

   I _____

   when _____

   because _____

Reprinted from Resolving Conflict Through Mediation, 12/15/94, with permission of Barbara Sarkis, Ætna.

Changing Inflammatory Statements

Grade Level: 6-9

Change the following "Inflammatory" Statements to "I" Statements:

1. You Dummy; you don't understand anything!
2. You're being unfair!
3. You don't really mean that; you're just trying to bug me!
4. Why did you do such a stupid thing?
5. Shut up, right now!
6. Write an inflammatory statement you have heard recently.

"STARTERS"

I feel angry when ...
I need ...
I'm sad because ...
I get embarrassed if ...
I want ...
I'm confused ...

Teachers: Try to use "I" statements with your students when conflicts develop, as a way to model handling anger for them.

1990, PEACE GROWS, Inc., 513 W. Exchange St., Akron, OH 44302 (216)864-5442 partially developed by a grant from the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management.

The Art of Listening: Hearing the Real Message

When you are a receiver, your job is to listen. Even more than that, you need to hear, to watch, and to sense. It's an art!

Listening can be difficult, especially when a speaker disguises his or her message. Sometimes people are too embarrassed or afraid to come right out and say what they want to say.

Suppose your friend asks you, "I'd look pretty good if my nose weren't so big, don't you think?" Inside, your friend hopes you will say, "Your nose is just right and you look great!" And if you are able to hear and sense what he or she *truly needs* at that moment, you'll respond to the *real* message.

Do you know someone (a friend or teacher perhaps) who knows how to listen so well that when you say something to him or her, you really feel understood? Does this person sometimes hear you even in silence? What is the secret of people like this? What do they do?

Chances are they look directly at you, and they seem interested in what you're saying. They may ask a question or two for clarification, but they usually don't interrupt much. They may repeat in different words (paraphrase) what they hear you say. Or they may focus on the feelings or meaning behind your words, so you feel heard on a deep level. You may not be aware of it, but they are probably noticing other things too--your nonverbal messages or "body language," which give added clues to the meanings and feelings behind your words.

How Does It Feel?

Can you remember a time when someone really listened to you?
Describe what happened and how you felt about the person.

_____

_____

_____

Can you remember a time when you listened well to someone?

The Art of Listening;

- **Listen in order to understand.** Don't get ready for what you are going to say next.
- **Pay attention to more than words.** Notice tone of voice, facial expression, posture, etc.
- **Try to put yourself in the speaker's shoes.** Listen for feelings.
- **Put aside your own opinions for the time being.** You can't listen to your own thoughts and someone else at the same time.
- **Be Patient.** Listening is speedier than talking, so don't jump ahead of the speaker.
- **Show your interest and empathy.** This can encourage a speaker to say more, to dig deeper into an issue or problem.
- **Don't interrupt.** Ask questions only when clarification is needed.
- **Clear up misunderstandings before you begin your own talk.**

Reprinted from Teaching the Skills of Conflict Resolution by David Cowan, Susanna Palomares and Dianne Schilling © 1992, with permission of Innerchoice Publishing.

Conflict Management Across the Curriculum

Understanding Conflict Across the Curriculum

Conflict management skills can be taught in the context of the standard adopted curriculum subjects, such as language arts, reading, social studies, health, science and math. This method of teaching conflict management saves time as both conflict management and required content are taught at the same time. This method also shows children that there are real life applications for the conflict management skills they are learning. Some examples of ways conflict management can be used with existing curriculum follow.

As you teach conflict management skills you will discover many opportunities to model and to incorporate these life skills into the curriculum. You may want to consider linking conflict management with academics.

1. Look at the objective of the lessons to be taught.
2. Look at the suggested activity for achieving the objective.
3. Consider the concepts and skills required to manage conflict nonviolently.
4. Decide if

- the suggested activity can be adapted in such a way that it can achieve both your primary objective and a conflict management objective
  or
- if a different activity could be used that would accomplish both objectives.

For example: your objective is to review for a test on content. If the activity for doing so is oral review, you might add that each student must paraphrase what the person before said before answering. The added objective would be to practice active listening and paraphrasing.

Language Arts

Listening skills are an important part of language arts. Active listening can help students to reinforce aural comprehension.

1. Teach active listening skills to help students focus on main points, restate, and listen for feelings, as well as facts.
2. Use listening skill activities as warm-ups before reading a story out loud or presenting a lesson.
3. Ask students to restate what characters are expressing in a story.
4. Pair students up and have one student tell about a conflict he/she has had while the other student listens for three minutes. Then have the other person restate what he/she hear. The students can reverse roles.

Speaking skills are another essential part of language arts. In everyday interactions with others it is important to be able to identify and express feelings. For most students this is difficult as they have a limited feeling word vocabulary. Developing this vocabulary and their ability to identify feelings can increase their ability to empathize with the characters about whom they read.

1. Provide activities that will increase the students feelings vocabulary and will help them to identify feelings.
2. Brainstorm feeling words and put them on a web.
3. Have students tell about a time when they felt a certain feeling.
4. Have students identify how characters in a story are feeling.
5. Have students write about feelings or use feeling words in a story.
6. Teach students how to organize their thoughts, feelings and needs and state them in a clear concise way.

Reading provides many opportunities to analyze conflict situations

- What effect did the conflict have on people involved?
- What choices/options were available?
- What would you have done in this situation?

Math

Problem solving is as much a natural part of mathematics as it is of conflict management. Consider the following ideas:

1. Separate the relevant information in a story problem from the irrelevant data.
2. Balance equations as a parallel for fair and equitable, win-win outcomes.
3. Apply logic to evaluating potential solutions. Will the choice really solve the problem?
4. Tackle dividing irregular polygons into equal pieces.
5. All conflict resolution involves solving puzzles. Apply the steps to solving mathematical puzzles to conflict situations.

Science

Examining conflict in nature is a great approach integrating science and conflict management. Consider the following possibilities.

1. Relate air and water pressure to anger management.
2. Study friction and lubricants as an analogy to conflict management.
3. Compare optical illusions to the problems of differing perspectives.
4. Consider the lessons that can be drawn from working with magnetism, chemical reactions, power sources, constructive and destructive uses of energy.
5. Study controversial environmental issues from both viewpoints.
6. Compare the scientific method to problem solving.

Art/Music

Consider these:

1. Listen to songs that promote peace and nonviolent conflict resolution.
2. Study harmony and dissonance.
3. Consider what elements in a musical composition escalate and de-escalate emotions.
4. Consider how tension, tone, and contrast are valuable in artistic works.
5. Develop art projects around the theme of promoting peace.
6. Design jigsaw puzzles.

Social Studies

Government, history, and sociology all deal with people and problems. Consider integrating lessons on conflict in these ways.

1. Study biographies of peacemakers.
2. Examine the causes of war.
3. Examine how different cultures deal with conflict.
4. Participate in local, state or nationally debated controversies.

Developed with contributions from Martha Green, PLOWSHARES, Glenford, OH 614-659-2322.

More Ways to Practice Across the Curriculum

Art

Cartoon Strips. Strengthen students' artistic abilities by having them create cartoon strips that show how to handle anger-provoking situations. Ask them to have one character respond in a positive way to someone's annoying behavior. Invite students to post their strips on a bulletin board and/or read them aloud.

> Teaching Tip: Use fights, arguments, and other negative encounters between students as "teachable moments." After tempers have cooled, discuss how the people involved responded to the problem. What did they say to one another? How did they say it? How might they have handled the situation more effectively?

Think of a Better Way. Invite volunteers to describe how they responded to the anger-provoking behavior of a classmate, friend, brother, or sister—without naming anyone. Select some situations for students to act out with a better approach, expressing their feelings in a more helpful way. Then discuss how different approaches lead to different outcomes.

Social Studies

Anger for Change. Have students work as individuals, groups, or a class to list things in the school or community that are unfair and make them angry, such as older students not sharing the playground equipment with younger students. Select several common concerns to explore as a class. Discuss how the students might use their anger to take positive action and address these problems.

Letter Campaign. Read aloud letters people have written to local newspapers about issues that upset them. Then encourage students to write to business or government leaders and express their own concerns, along with possible ways to address those concerns. Before mailing the letters, read several aloud and post copies on a bulletin board. Discuss and post any responses to students' letters.

In the News. To promote interest in current affairs, have students bring in news stories that describe the consequences of expressing anger in negative ways. Discuss how calming down, thinking things through, and talking things out might have changed what happened.

Expressing Anger is a component of a comprehensive conflict management program, Lions-Quest Working It Out 1995, with permission of Quest International.

Academic Controversy

Structured Controversies

Structured controversies promote conceptual conflicts. In order to maximize student achievement, student critical thinking, and student use of higher-level reasoning strategies, teachers need to engage students in educational conflicts within which they have to prepare positions, view the issue from a variety of perspectives, and synthesize the various positions into one position. The frequent use of academic controversies allows students to practice their conflict skills daily.

Taken from Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers, Interaction Book Company David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, 1991

Procedure For An Issue Controversy

Goals:
1. Work together to reach the best decision.
2. Reach an individual, informed opinion.

Steps: Each group of four follows these steps.

1. Form groups of four. Within each group, make two teams, A and B.
2. Define the issue or problem and identify the two positions.
3. Assign team A to one position and team B to the other.
4. Each team researches their position and articulates the main ideas and details to support it.
5. All teams assigned the same position can periodically work together to share their information.
6. Within each group, team A presents its information to team B. Then team B presents its information.
7. Questions go back and forth.
8. Each team switches perspectives and summarizes the other position accurately and completely.
9. The group of four complete a pro/con analysis of each position and reaches a decision. Each member of the group must be able to state the group's decision and the support for it.
10. Finally, each individual writes a justified personal opinion as to which position to support.

Excerpt from Issue Controversy Social Studies Department of Pomperaug High School Region 15 Public Schools, Southbury, CT 0676

Conflict Management Art Slogans For Making Posters

Friends Stick Together Like Glue

Don't Fight, Do What Is Right

Don't Let Your Temper Explode

Don't Lose Your Cool

Be Honest And Sincere

Fighting Only Brings Tears

Be A Glamorous Person Fight Fair

Be A Hero Not A Bully

Forgive And Forget

Don't Horse Around And Make Excuses

Tackle The Problem, Not The Person

Hands Are For Helping, Not Hurting

Don't Put Others Down

The Blame Game Won't Get You Anywhere

Hitting Isn't Cool

Attack The Problem, Not The Person

Be Smart, Don't Start Fighting

Don't Be Cruel To Others

Don't Wreck Your Friendship

Don't Be A Bully

Be A Friend To The End

Be Nice About Solving Problems

Keep Cool, Don't Be A Fool

Respect People's Property

Stop In The Name Of Peace

The "Music Listening" Exercise

Language Arts, Music

Objective:
The students will practice paraphrasing and listening for feelings.

Materials: two or three contemporary songs (tape or C.D.) that have clear lyrics and express strong feelings.

Procedure:
Tell students that an important part of conflict management is listening and understanding what others are saying.

Explain that you want the students to participate in an exercise that will sharpen their listening skills; say that music will be used to practice accurate listening.

Play a segment of a song. Ask someone in the class to tell (paraphrase) in his/her own words what the singer said. Caution the students not to add to or subtract from the message of the singer. Once the paraphrase is made, ask the students if they think the listener was accurate. If not, ask the student to improve the paraphrase until everyone is satisfied that the feedback is accurate.

Repeat this paraphrasing process for several more musical segments.

Tell students that you are going to play the same segments again (or new segments) and this time you want them to identify the feelings of the singer.

Re-play the segments. Ask students to identify the feeling(s) being expressed.

List the feelings identified by the group.

Next, play several musical segments and ask students to restate the singer's message and feelings. Suggest that students say, "He/she is feeling _____about _____."

Conclude the exercise by explaining that the students have just combined the essential parts for an active listening response.

Suggest that before the next session they spend time *hearing* what other people (on TV, compact discs, family, friends) are saying and feeling.

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Physical Education Shape Up!

This lesson provides a concrete means for students to experience a common conflict experience in a controlled environment and, through discussion, to analyze it in order to gain insight. The teacher's role is to provide a safe environment, constantly watching for potential problems.

Objectives:

1. To actively engage in cooperative problem solving.
2. To recognize the importance of conflict management skills.

Directions:

1. Have a fifty-foot rope, tied together at the ends, laid out on the floor in the shape of a circle.

2. Ask the class to stand inside the rope, standing boy/girl.

3. Ask the class to hold the rope behind them at about waist level. They must hold the rope at waist level for the entire game.

4. A leader(s) will help. If the group would like to choose a leader, or co-leaders, they may do so. Co-leaders must be a boy and girl. Leaders do not have to stay within the rope. They may move wherever they would like.

5. If someone has an idea to share with the group, call a huddle. When someone calls a huddle, the group stands shoulder to shoulder, with no one standing behind anyone else, and one person at a time will share their ideas with the group.

6. Appoint another adult to be a 'line judge', or the teacher may take this role. The line judge will determine if the group has accomplished the activity they were asked to complete. The judge should be fairly strict in determining whether the group has met the requirements for the activity. All the line judge will say is, "yes" or "no." He/she cannot explain why the group has not satisfactorily completed the activity.

Ask the group to make the following shapes: circle, square, equilateral triangle, an arrow pointing left, an arrow pointing right.

The line judge is always the bottom of the line. (This will be important later on for various shapes.)

Hint: Have the group begin with the circle and move down the shapes in the first column and move on to the next column. There is a definite progression in moving from one shape to another.

Time limit: it will take some groups 30 minutes to complete only three shapes.

Circle	make a 'W',	make an '!'
Square	make an 'M'	make an 'i'
Equilateral triangle	make an 'S'	make a 'Z'
An arrow pointing left	make an arrow pointing right	

End: Walk into the circle until you are standing shoulder to shoulder. Drop the rope. Take three steps backwards without tripping over the rope.

Processing questions:

Ask students to sit in a circle, boy girl. Pass a ball around the circle. Ask one person at a time, beginning with the leader and moving around the circle to the right, one of the following questions. Change questions every three or four students to keep things interesting.

What was easy about the exercise?

What was difficult?

What was frustrating?

What do you wish the group/leaders/line judges had done differently?

What caused conflict?

What would have made it easier to resolve the conflict?

What did you learn about the group and how it works together?

What did you contribute to the group to help it work together or fall apart?

What will the group have to do differently next time?

How does this apply to the conflicts you experience in your lives?

How can what you learned in this activity help you as a problem solver?

Answers can include:

We need to cooperate and work well together if we want to solve our problems and help others solve theirs.

We need to communicate clearly, listen carefully and explore options cooperatively.

Adapted from materials developed by Bob Gregic, © 1995.
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Family Harmony: Conflict Management at Home

Conflict management skills and concepts can be used in the home by adults and children to create a living environment that invites every family member to participate in problem solving. For reading ease, the word "parent" is used in this article to refer to a parent, guardian or other adult that has responsibility for child care.

To achieve family harmony and encourage the use of effective, non-violent conflict management skills:

- ✔ Parents give themselves permission to acknowledge their own feelings, particularly anger; differentiate between residual anger and current frustrations; and access the healthy energy of anger and utilize it to move forward toward building solutions.
- ✔ Parents enable children / youth to focus the energy of their feelings toward building solutions and are particularly sensitive to gender socializations that tend to compel girls to release angry feelings through tears (powerlessness) and boys to release sadness and or fear through anger or aggression.
- ✔ Parents model and coach children / youth to solve problems by asking reality-checking questions that focus on children's strengths, hopes and future goals, e.g., "I wonder what you would like to do differently?"
- ✔ All family members acknowledge and practice a procedure that requires all persons directly involved in the conflict to come together to build the solution. Parents facilitate the process between siblings by listening and posing problem-solving questions and encouraging each sibling to contribute to the solution.
- ✔ The framework within which the process of family conflict management is implemented is consensus. A consensus process requires each family member to ask themselves two questions: "How can this problem be resolved so we can all live in harmony" and "How can this problem be resolved in a way that will allow each person to feel the solution is fair?"
  The goal of consensus is to promote interdependence and mutual respect.
- ✔ All family members practice active listening and use "I" messages intentionally to create and maintain an environment in which each person, regardless of age or gender, can take the risk of stating their needs and interests.
- ✔ When implementing the conflict resolution process; particular care is used to assure that each person involved in the conflict articulates the first step of defining the problem from their perspective. This trust-building stem cannot be forced or evaded. If necessary, allow each participant to privately write and read each other's definition of the problem.
- ✔ Parents remain aware of their body language and tone of voice during this processing in order to maintain an atmosphere of emotional security. Children / youth are most vulnerable in this setting.
- ✔ At all times, use humor and keep focused on building solutions that will permit each person involved in the conflict to satisfy their interests.

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